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ABSTRACT

There is an increasing need for better counseling programs at colleges and universities in order to meet their educational objectives in preparing students for future careers. This need can be met through greater planning, placing more emphasis on the career program early in the academic program, and research on current employment trends which professors or counselors can relate to their students. Professors and counselors should also stress the importance of business communication (oral and written) which is useful in a job search campaign. Searching for a job requires a lot of energy, initiative, and creativity. Five steps which are useful in a job search campaign include: (1) self assessment, (2) skills resume, (3) location of contacts, (4) plans for visit to target city, and (5) scheduled interviews. (EC)

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CONCEPT OF A COMMUNICATION CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR THE INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE STUDENT

By Helon M. Lindsey

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The latest Endicott report and other sources emphasize the need for colleges and universities to direct their programs toward better counselling of the students in their curricula for their future careers.

Since the objective of all colleges and universities is to educate the students for their roles in society and their professional careers, don't you agree that the professors of communications and counsellors are presented with a great challenge to work and cooperate with the students and their respective schools to help them achieve their goals? How can professors meet this challenge?

First, greater planning and emphasis upon the career program needs to begin early in the academic program. The professors and counsellors can research for current trends about the desires of employers of business firms, which relate to the role of the student in the job-getting process. We can check recent publications about research which indicate new trends about the successful procedures for job-getting; talk to executives of business firms about their preferences for interviews and plan to use taped interviews in the classroom. Representatives from business firms could answer questions about company interviews

at planned seminars held on campuses.

The professors can also find useful information from students who have gone for interviews with companies. If they have accepted employment, these students can offer valuable viewpoints about guidelines that resulted in successful interviews for them.

Secondly, the professors can place more emphasis upon business communications (oral and written) useful to the student in the job search campaign. The student can get a job in these times of a tight market if he or she plans well and follows through with the job search campaign. As you know, many students may need to become more mobil, and if they are willing to exert a great deal of energy, strive to be more creative, and take more initiative, they can get the job if they have the necessary skills.

Dr. Michele Stimac (currently a Professor at Pepperdine University, Los Angeles, California, and formerly Director of Career Counselling at Babson College, Boston) in her article "You Can Get a Job These Days, Even 3,000 Miles Away. . . with the Right Strategy," published in the Journal of the National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors, Fall of 1975, told of the story of a recent successful job search campaign.

Janet (I have a feeling that Janet was Dr. Stimac) had served as a career counselor at an eastern college where she counselled others about how to conduct fruitful job search which

depended largely on first hand knowledge of today's market. However, Janet had married Brad in her middle years, and he had accepted a position on the West Coast. Janet found the need to begin her job search campaign on the West Coast. She remembered a remark from a giant in the field of career development, "If you want to be effective as a career counselor or someone helping others find jobs, you ought continually to be looking for a job yourself." With Janet's personal professional motive, she began her full-fledged job search.

The campaign took a great deal of energy, and she remembered that she had told others, "You have to be turned on to yourself, to your worth. You have to know your skills and believe in yourself. This done, you plunge forth full speed ahead, leaving no stone unturned." These are the five steps Janet followed in her job search campaign:

Step 1 - Self-Assessment. She carefully studied her life and singled out her talents and skills to determine her worth. Richard Bolles in What Color Is Your Parachute? stresses that skills are at the center of a career.

Step 2 - Skills Resume. Through self assessment Janet discovered that she was quite versatile, and in her interviews later several interviewers remarked that her resume was impressive. She found that the skills resume displayed more versatility than a drab chronological resume.

Step 3 - Location of Contacts. Janet knew of no one of consequence in the city where her husband worked. She had taught

others that one of the most effective ways to get a job is to "work through people." She wrote to a friend who had contacts on the West Coast though he himself lived 450 miles away. Another source was a Midwest friend who had worked on the West Coast for a couple of years before. These two friends provided her with leads which led to more and more leads--correspondence from many sources. She became more and more creative in her letter-writing campaign.

Janet made sure that she wrote to a specific person for each company to achieve her rationale for writing to each one. She tried to write to companies that offered the greatest potential, and she aimed for more than one target. She typed long hours each night to separately compose each letter--never a form letter.

Step 4 - Plans for Visit to Target City. After the fourth month of her campaign, Janet planned to take two weeks of her vacation and go to the target city on the West Coast. The four months of her campaign gave time to discover many leads through her correspondence strategy, and she judged that the employers she had chosen as her chief target would be hiring at that time. Janet corresponded with those employers, who were interested in her, and she indicated the time she would be in that city for two weeks and available for interviews.

Step 5 - Scheduled Interviews. Janet had five scheduled interviews before she went to the West Coast, and she confirmed nine others by telephone. During the 14 formal interviews, she

met 23 sets of people in lead-getting conferences, most in academic circles, her chief target.

Two days after her arrival in the city, she received her first good offer, and by the time she decided to accept a position she had written 118 letters, taken 14 formal interviews, met 23 different sets of people, established contact with 51 people, made 43 telephone calls after arriving on the west Coast and 9 long distance calls. Janet knew that the long hours she had spent in her job-seeking campaign had paid off after receiving many compliments for her impressive skills resume and personally typed letters.

Would you like to know how the lead came that ultimately led to the job Janet accepted? Dr. Stimac suggests that this lead demonstrates that in looking for a job, one leaves no stone unturned.

Brad, her husband, had stopped at the airport post office to write and mail his daily letter to Janet. He noticed a stack of flyers at the edge of the counter. One of the flyers was the announcement of a local university building dedication, and the Chancellor was inviting interested people to attend. Brad scribbled a note on the flyer, circled the name of the Chancellor, suggested that she might be interested and enclosed it in his note to Janet.

After glancing doubtfully at the flyer for a week, she wrote a letter to the Chancellor, and within a week she received a letter from him telling her he had sent her resume to the

Executive Vice-President. Janet doubted that she would hear from him, but she typed a thank-you letter to the Chancellor.

A letter from the Executive Vice-President arrived within another week telling her he had sent her resume to the Dean of one of the schools. Again doubtful, she typed a thank-you letter to the Executive Vice-President and felt bold as she commended him for his and the Chancellor's quick communication with each other and their personal letters to her. She also reminded him of the inclusive dates that she would be on the West Coast and gave two phone numbers where she could be reached. Three days later, Janet left for the West Coast. She received the important telephone call inviting her to see them. Janet accepted the job.

Although Dr. Stimac's story, "You Can Get a Job These Days, Even 3,000 Miles Away. . . with the Right Strategy" relates to a case about Janet who had experience, students at colleges and universities can achieve their career goals by exerting a great deal of energy, striving to be more creative, and taking more initiative.

Probably many of you have worked with students who needed to become more mobil and conduct an intensive job search campaign. A senior accounting major in one of my business communication classes last quarter accepted a position with an accounting firm in Chicago after following the five steps in her job search campaign.

By continuing to research for present trends about career planning, and by placing greater emphasis upon business communications (oral and written) about the job-getting process, I believe professors and counsellors can help students to better achieve their goals--to fulfill their roles in society and in beginning their professional careers. Let's cooperate with our college and university administrators to achieve this goal.